T/SOR/49/5/4

Free all political prisoners

S-L, 9/16/89

DEAR EDITOR:

You recently published an article by J. Scott Orr entitled "Smith tells of Soviet labor camp." The article detailed Rep. Christopher Smith's visit to a Soviet prison and quoted him encouraging the Soviet Union to release jailed prisoners of conscience. Rep. Smith noted that some of the prisoners he spoke with were being held for political reasons and for opposing government policies.

While I wholeheartedly support Rep. Smith's condemnation of imprisoning people for their political beliefs, he needs to extend his concern to this nation. We have routinely imprisoned people for their political beliefs, some of whom have been incarcerated since their youth. Some of this population consisted of activist Native Americans, Puerto Ricans who seek independence, Black Liberation Army members and members of the Move group in Philadelphia.

While some of these men and women broke laws of this country, many remain incarcerated for decades for minor offenses. The year 1990 marks a full 200 years of prisons in this nation. It is time to take a look at just who it is that we incarcerate and what "crimes" we incarcerate for. Imprisonment for politically questioning a system of government is wrong for any nation.

Bonnie Kerness, Associate Director,
New Jersey Community Relations Program,
American Friends Service Committee,
Newark

THE STAR-LEDGER, Thursday, January 23, 1992

V V V

DEAR EDITOR:

John Farmer's column about the ineptitude of Philadelphia's Mayor Goode needs some alternative perspectives. While I agree with much of his characterization of Mayor Goode, to fall into the media-perpetuated fallacy that MOVE was just a "nasty band of radical" and therefore derserved to die is dangerous. Noting that the bomb killed 11 people is also misleading since five of those "people" were children—and hardly "nasty." As for defying "code enforcement officials" and "harassing neighbors," the last time I heard this was punishable by fines, not imprisonment or death.

While those who believe in MOVE's principles may not be considered mainstream, it remains important for officials and the public to listen to our radical critics. Their philosophies have validity and serve as a reflection of many who live in this country besieged by racist policies. Also to classify the bombing of MOVE as inept is to ignore the body of documented evidence which strongly confirms that the travesty was pre-planned and executed as planned by Philadelphia with the assistance of federal agencies.

This country has continuously silenced dissidents such as MOVE, the Black Liberation Army, the Black Panthers, Puerto Rican Independentistas, North American Plowshares adherents and the American Indian Movement, I find it frightening that forms of genocide continue . . .

Bonnie Kerness, Associate Director,
New Jersey Community Relations Program,
American Friendship Service Committee,
Newark

The Record

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 1992 — Friend of the People It Serves

N.J. political prisoners do hard time in solitary

By Bill Sanderson
Record Staff Writer

TRENTON — Since 1986, Ojore N. Lutalo has been in solitary confinement at New Jersey State Prison, locked alone his cell 22 to 24 hours a day. He isn't being treated this way because he broke prison rules — if he had, he would have been returned to the general prison population years ago.

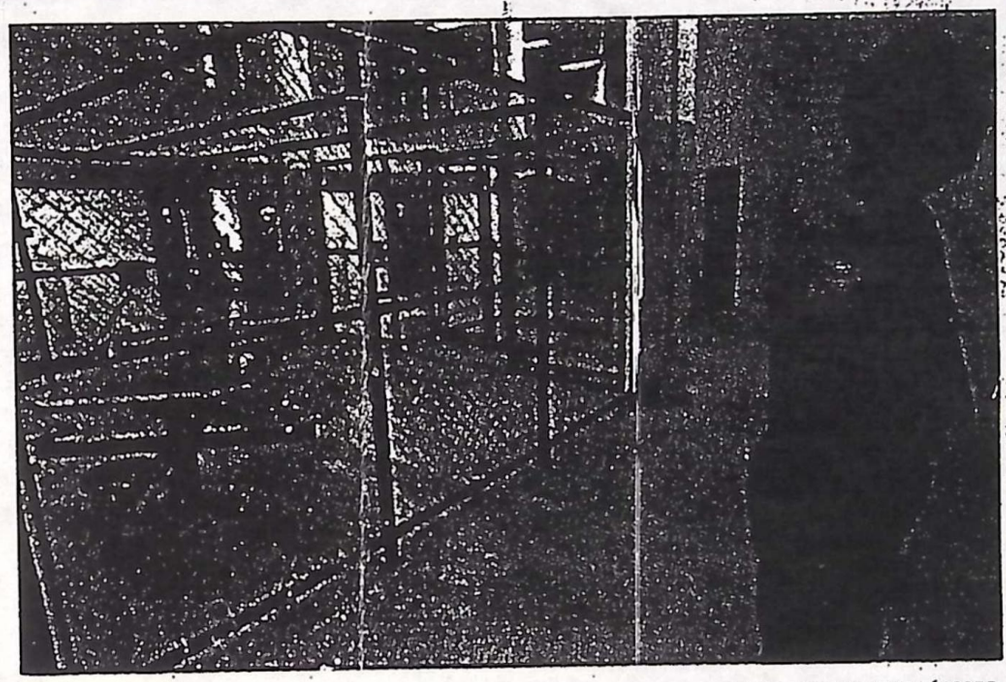
Instead, in a nation that venerates freedom of thought, Lutalo is a political prisoner — one of 77 inmates segregated from other convicted criminals because prison officials fear their political and religious ideas could foment trouble.

Because Lutalo broke no rules, prison officials say his placement in the management control unit, or MCU, isn't punishment. But inmates say life is hard enough in New Jersey State, the state's most dangerous and most secure prison, without enduring the MCU's enforced isolation and idleness.

"A lot of the prisoners can't cope with the constant lockdown," said Lutalo, who is serving a 20- to 44-year sentence for a 1975 armed robbery. "They deteriorate mentally."

Inmates also complain that being in the MCU adds years to their sentences, since they can't hold prison jobs or accumulate education credits they need to win early release. Ask anyone in the prison what MCU inmates do to pass the time, and the answer

See SOLITARY Page A-10



CARMINE GALASSO/THE RECORD

Inmates in solitary confinement refuse to use the "cages" for recreation or meals.

TSR/49/514

SOLITARY: Inmates isolated

From Page A-1

is: "Not much."

"You sit in your cell all day," said Clifford Roberts, an MCU inmate serving 10 to 14 years for armed robbery. "You do absolutely nothing."

All but a few MCU inmates are black — a fact that has led to a federal lawsuit accusing prison officials of discriminating against inmates who appear to adopt black radical political beliefs.

Some, like Lutalo, hold ideas far from the mainstream, advocating violent revolution against what they view as white-dominated society. Others believe that blacks must educate themselves, return to Africa, and build a society apart from white oppression.

Prison officials don't differentiate among the varying ideologies. They say the MCU is needed to prevent violence — even though the inmates sent there are not themselves troublemakers.

"Those inmates housed in the MCU are not the inmates who do the assaulting," said W. Stanley Nunn, the prison's chief guard. "They are the ones who are behind such actions by other inmates."

MCU inmates aren't getting the harshest treatment possible in New Jersey prisons. Those who break specific rules or laws can be placed in one of the prison system's administrative segregation units, where visits and activities are even more strictly curtailed.

But while inmates in administrative segregation serve fixed terms of up to a year — and can, of course, have their sentences extended if they are convicted of crimes — inmates are put in the MCU for indefinite periods. Prison rules say inmates can be placed in the MCU if they pose a "substantial threat" to the safety and operation of the prison. There are no criteria that can lead inmates to be returned to the general population.

"An inmate, if he is placed in there by a committee, can actually spend a lot of years, or his whole prison life, in that unit," said Howard L. Beyer, the prison's warden.

"If they don't like you, you can wind up here for a long time, for doing absolutely nothing," said Willie Williams, who is serving 12 to 14 years for armed robbery and has been in the MCU since 1988. "They are making these allegations that you can influence people. To me, that borders on George Orwell's thought crimes."

"It's like triple jeopardy," said Ajamu Kafele, who says he was in the MCU for all but a few months between 1986 and 1990. He was paroled on armed robbery charges in August, four years after he became eligible.

Kafele is a founder and leader of the Afrikan National Ujamaa, which he describes as an educational movement. ANU literature urges blacks to strengthen their family relationships, complains that whites have oppressed black society, and offers an Afrocentric view of world history.

Prison administrators say they have confidential information that the ANU is a terrorist organization. Guards have seized its literature, and sent alleged ANU members to the MCU on the grounds that the group is "involved in the disruption of the orderly running of New Jersey State Prison."

Kafele says allegations that the ANU is a terrorist group are "ridiculous," and adds that the prison didn't really consider the ANU's non-violent views when its members were sent to the MCU.

But after a series of disturbances, culminating in an August 1990 attack in which three guards were beaten nearly to death, Kafele and other ANU leaders were among those blamed — even though many were isolated in the MCU at the time.

"We were scapegoats," Kafele said. After the disturbance, prison officials sent him to New Mexico State Prison, under a multistate agreement allowing prisoners to be transferred between states for security or other reasons. Kafele spent a year in New Mexico before being paroled.

Audrey Bomse, a lawyer in the state Office of Inmate Advocacy, said none of the seven inmates indicted in the assault had any connection with the ANU, and she noted that the indictment does not allege any conspiracy.

MCU inmates are allowed hearings every 90 days on their status. But the allegations that put inmates in the MCU are often backed up by anonymous sources — preventing the accused from responding to the evidence against them.

U'bay Lumumba, the plaintiff in the federal suit that says blacks are singled out for placement in the unit, was placed in the MCU after the August 1990 attacks and was accused of being an ANU member. "His placement in the management control unit will promote the safe, secure, and orderly running of New Jersey State Prison," a prison report on his case says.

Lumumba, serving 30 to 98 years for killing a security guard, denies being involved in the attack or the ANU. Prison officials claim to have confidential information saying otherwise — but because officials won't disclose their information to Lumumba, he can't challenge it.

"It really is a Kafkaesque situation," said Bomse, who maintains that racist paranoia by prison internal affairs investigators is the real reason inmates are placed in the MCU. "They are afraid of any kind of consciousness being raised among black prisoners," she said.

> "His placement in the management control unit will promote the safe, secure, and orderly running of New Jersey State Prison."
>
> *— Prison report on the case of U'bay Lumumba, above, who sued the state over placement of blacks in the MCU*

Corrections officials deny that racism is a factor in placing inmates in the MCU. They also say they aren't afraid of the inmates' ideas, and point out that at other New Jersey prisons, a wide variety of inmate groups are allowed.

But at New Jersey State, disputes about religion and politics have a history of leading to trouble.

The MCU was established after a fight between two rival black Muslim groups in October 1975 in which one inmate died and several were seriously injured. For the following month, all inmates in the prison remained locked in their cells. After the lockdown ended

From Panther to Anarchist

T(SOR)49/5/4

We continue our series on black nationalism, with a look at the Black Panthers and the Black American anarchists.

EIGHTEEN MONTHS AFTER the murder of Malcolm X, the Black Panther Party was formed in Oakland, California by two black nationalists — Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. Starting off by setting up armed patrols in Oakland that shadowed cop patrol cars, in three years they had set up 30 chapters, the largest of which, in Chicago, may have had a membership of 5,000 at its peak.

Essentially the Black Panther ideology was a mixture of black nationalism with a stiff dose of Marxist-Leninism, derived from Mao ZheDong and Castro. They saw themselves as a vanguard party. Yet they were significantly different from other Marxist-Leninist groups in their emphasis on the lumpenproletariat, the most degraded elements in capitalist society. In this they were at odds with Marx and Engels who had written in the *Communist Manifesto* of, "The 'dangerous' class, the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue".

The Panthers strongly criticised the 'cultural nationalists' who advocated a return to Africa. One Panther militant referred to the Back-to-Africa line as "a bourgeois-capitalist scheme, to confuse the masses of people, so that they will not assault the city halls..."

White mother

The adoption of 'Marxist-Leninism' made the Panthers emphasise an anti-capitalist line. "We have two evils to fight, capitalism and racism. We must destroy both racism and capitalism." (Huey Newton, 1968). In one of their programmes they stated, "There must be a revolution in the white mother country, led by white radicals and poor whites, and national liberation in the black and third world colony here in America. We can't triumph in the colony alone because that is just like cutting one finger off a hand... No, when we deal with this monster we must deal with it totally". By summer 1969, the Panthers were referring to a general social revolution. "All members of the working class must seize the means of production. This, naturally, includes black people." By autumn, Newton was arguing that a separate black America of five or six states could not survive if the rest of the United States remained capitalist.

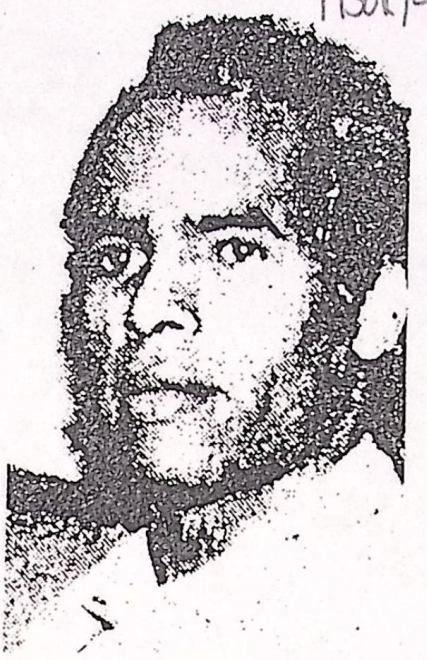
The Panthers had gone beyond black nationalism. Unfortunately, in going beyond it and looking for radical solutions, they were inevitably influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideology, at that time, in the late '60s and early '70s, at its most popular. They were among the most militant and combative black working class people in America, and this inevitably attracted the attention of the FBI. Between 1956 and 1971 it conducted a large scale Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) against black groups. They infiltrated the Panthers, and in early 1969 fired as many as 200 rounds into a Chicago apartment where Panthers were sleeping, killing one leading member and mortally wounding another. Prior to this, some 300 arrests were made on Panthers throughout Los Angeles, and raids were carried out on Panther offices across America.

Leadership

Along with the massive State repression unleashed against the Panthers, came the growth of the power of the leadership, and their increasing corruption and autocracy. In 1971 the Black Panther Party split in two. Newton designated himself the Supreme Commander, and any idea of collective decision-making was scrapped. This came with an increasing admiration for Stalin, Chief of Staff Hilliard stating, "We think that Stalin was very clear in this concept — that socialism could be implemented in one country, we say that it can be implemented in one community".

There was widespread dissatisfaction with the high-handedness and corruption of the leadership, in particular in New York and Los Angeles, as well as the exile section in Algiers. These dissidents were expelled from the Black Panther Party. They decided to take the path of élite armed action against the State. It was understandable that they should take this path, considering the high level of State repression, the Marxist-Leninist rhetoric of the leadership, and the failure to create effective links with other sections of the working class. A number of assassinations of cops, attacks on police stations and bank robberies were carried out by the newly formed Black Liberation Army. In the resulting counter-attacks by the State, over 20 were killed and 25 imprisoned.

Among those imprisoned was Kuwasi Balagoon. He had resisted racism whilst in military service, going on to become a tenant organiser in New York. He was one of the 'Panther 21' indicted in 1971. He went underground, staying there when all charges against the 21 were dropped in 1973, and working with the BLA. In prison he started to develop anarchist ideas, from his criticisms of bureaucracy



Above: Kuwasi Balagoon.

in the BPP. He influenced a number of other BLA prisoners, including Ojore N. Lutalo. He died of AIDS-related pneumonia in 1986.

Balagoon

Balagoon's anarchism was an important development in the black American working class. He rejected centralised party structures, and "replacing one ruling class with another...in the guise of a fairer boss or as a party". He saw that this was what separated "anarchist revolutionaries from Marxist, socialist and nationalist revolutionaries who from the onset do not embrace complete revolution. They cannot envision a truly free and equalitarian society and must to some extent embrace the socialisation process that makes exploitation and oppression possible in the first place".

Balagoon saw the need for mass organising, but failed to break with the concept of armed élite action, and still maintained some illusions in nationalism to the extent of stating, "It is beside the point whether Black, Puerto Rican, Native American and Chicano-Mexicano people choose nationalism as a vehicle for self-determination. As revolutionaries we must support the will of the masses". He failed to see that revolutionary anarchists must consistently argue against nationalism, and that often they are in a minority. "Supporting the will of the masses" can mean surrendering to a number of reactionary ideas within the working class.

Ojore Lutalo still remains in prison and still regards himself as an anarchist, although like Balagoon, he has not broken with the idea of minority armed action. He says that he feels that "the people need armed combat units to check state sponsored acts of terrorism by the government's security forces". We agree that the attacks of the State's security forces must be countered, but any premature action must not jeopardise the building of a mass movement, and often very quickly degenerates into elitist actions completely divorced from reality.

Dialogue

White anarchists in the United States failed to engage in dialogue with black activists, and themselves had no perspectives on class struggle and the need for a united, mass struggle. Black people in America who clearly see the oppressive and racist nature of capitalism have often had a justified and healthy mistrust of white radicals who often saw them as party fodder, to be patronised and led, without themselves recognising the special problems that black working class people face.

The fact that some black American activists did evolve anarchist ideas, given the difficult circumstances, is a remarkable achievement. We may now face another wave of radicalisation in the black American working class after the recent uprisings. This time around, revolutionary anarchists should build on the gains made in the past, and attempt to increase the size of the tiny nuclei of black anarchists and to work towards a mass movement that unites black, red, yellow, brown and white.

OJORE N. LUTALO can be written to at 59860 M.C.U., CN-861, Trenton NJ 08625, USA.

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An Anarchist Defense of Pornography

Pornography continues to be a controversial issue, including among anarchists, whom one might expect to be among the strongest supporters of free sexual expression. However, many anarchists have criticized pornography and some have supported and or participated in the antipornography movement, the members of which not infrequently strive to prevent those wishing to view pornography from doing so. Some anarchists in Canada even went so far as to firebomb a sex video store, an activity which many other anarchists either ignored or chose not to criticize. Meanwhile, those of us who defend pornography and freedom of expression, sexual or otherwise, are dismissed as sexists and reactionaries. Why is it that supposed lovers of freedom and sexual liberation seem to forget their principles when it comes to sexually explicit literature and pictures?

The antipornography movement, including its anarchist members and supporters, is not monolithic. Some dislike dirty books and movies, but support people's freedom to produce and consume such material. They rely on argument and protest in an attempt to change the attitudes of those who like porn, encouraging them to refrain from indulging in it, and do not support censorship. Others, again including some anarchists, feel that physical attacks on porn stores or government-mandated censorship are acceptable tactics in the fight against porn. While only the latter position is censorious, and therefore unanarchic, the former position, which is contemptuous of depictions of sex is also problematic in a movement which purportedly favors sexual freedom.

Pornography is simply a depiction, in words or pictures, of sexual activity. Most people find sex a good, pleasurable activity and looking at pornography is sexually arousing for many people. Anti-porn people frequently say that the images of women in porn are degrading and offensive to women. However, while some women certainly are offended by pornographic images they find degrading, other women enjoy pornography. (See, for instance the book *Caught Looking* by Kate Ellis, et al, or *Writing Sado-masochistic Pornography: A Woman's Defense* by Deborah Ryder.) While the anti-porn movement views women as a class, who all share the same goals and desires, women are not a mass of automatons who all think and feel alike; some are pro-porn and some are anti-porn, just like men. Additionally, the images of women in porn are no more sexist and demeaning towards women than the images of women in most literature and visual media, from novels to movies to TV to magazine ads. In a sexist society, most images of women are going to contain at least some of the sexist attitudes common to both women and men. Besides, some pornography contains women characters who are very independent, self-motivated and concerned with their own pleasure, especially in S/M porn where women are frequently on top. What bothers these people is not the image of women in porn, which is like that elsewhere in society, but its sexual explicitness; they are uncomfortable with sex.

Anti-porn activists also claim that porn, with its allegedly degrading view of women is responsible for the attitudes and actions of men towards women, and therefore is different from other forms of expression. But, as with other types of writing and pictures, porn generally shows what people want to see and are comfortable with; it doesn't plant foreign ideas in people's minds. And, even in the few cases where novel ideas are introduced to people in porn, they remain just that, ideas. Men do not rape or beat women because they see it in a movie. Sexism, rape, and beatings of women by their partners existed long before the widespread dissemination of modern pornography, and societies with little or no porn are no less sexist and violent than those where it is common.

The claim that men are made violent by porn, besides being inaccurate, is also based on a myth: that most pornography is violent. Most porn is composed of depictions of non-violent, consensual, mutually pleasurable sex. Some of it also contains S/M sex, which, while including the trappings of violence, and involving (apparent) pain, is also consensual and mutually pleasurable. There is certainly some porn which depicts rape or other coercive and violent sex, but it is a small portion of the porn produced and consumed. Moreover, like violent non-sexual movies and books, it is simply a depiction of a fantasy, made up by the author, or performed by consenting actors. Violent porn is no more real violence than are the *Halloween* movies. And if anti-porn people are truly concerned about the violence and not the sex in porn, why is it that they protest only porn shops or destroy porn mags and video stores, while ignoring *Friday the Thirteenth* and horror magazines and books?

One aspect of the whole phenomenon of porn that is often left out of the discussion is that of homosexual porn. Much of the pornography produced today shows men having sex with men, with a growing proportion depicting woman-woman sex. The anti-porners tend to ignore homoporn because it gives the lie to many of their arguments. If depictions of inequitable sexual encounters between men and women are degrading to women, why aren't similarly inequitable encounters between men and other men (which are very common in all-male porn, with its tops and bottoms) degrading to men? And if they are degrading to men, why isn't such porn offensive to men, especially bottom men? And, if there is S/M imagery and (pretend) violence in this porn, why doesn't this result in widespread violence against men, and even rapes of men?

A discussion of such issues never takes place, since most of the people who oppose heteroporn are unwilling to talk about, let alone criticize, queer porn because they do not want to risk being seen as 'homophobic' or otherwise politically incorrect. This is due to the fact that porn has often been seen, rightly, as liberatory by homosexualist men (and recently also by some homosexualist women), and is a much more open part of mainstream life for queer men that heteroporn is in straight society. Because of this 'politicization' of queer porn, any discussion of homoporn by the anti-porners, few of whom are homosexualist men, is likely to be criticized by gay liberationists as 'anti-gay,' and thus effectively suppressed. This is unfortunate, since such a discussion would show the fallacies in the anti-porn arguments.

Even though it seems odd that sexual liberationists and anarchists find porn offensive, it is certainly true that people have different tastes. Just because I like porn doesn't mean that you should. But, if one finds something offensive, they should simply avoid it, and thereby avoid the offense. However anti-porners are not content with this strategy when it comes to porn. They feel that if it offends them, it must offend others, primarily women, and they take it upon themselves to protect others from it. Additionally, since they feel it leads otherwise non-violent, women-loving men onto the path of violence and sexism, they feel they need to prevent men from seeing porn as well.

As stated above, anti-porners differ on the strategy they employ to achieve these ends. While those who rely on argument and protest to influence others to avoid porn are preferable to the censors, their ideas about people should be problematic for those with an anarchist perspective. People are free agents who make choices and decisions based on what they observe, hear, and otherwise experience, and are responsible for the outcome of these choices. The libertarian way to deal with other free agents who choose to view or read materials of which one disapproves is to let them see these books or movies and then discuss the material with them and try to convince them of one's point of view.*[...]*

More objectionable to anarchists, however, are the anti-porn activists who are frankly censorious.*[...]* While sharing the views of anti-porners who seek to protect others from porn, these people go a step further and use coercive force to achieve their ends. This is totally incompatible with the kind of voluntary society sought by most anarchists, and should be denounced by all freedom-lovers.

Pornography, like any other form of entertainment can be good or bad, based on the individual merits of any particular work. However, as a genre of literature or film, it is no better or worse or good or evil than any other. If porn is bad or sexist, the best strategy is to criticize it and discuss it with others, and/or make good, non-sexist porn, not suppress it. Sex and its depiction are a source of pleasure for many and our freedom to indulge in both should be defended, or at least tolerated, by anarchists. Censors, including those who claim to be anarchists, are the enemies of freedom, and anarchists who support them call into question their commitment to a free society.

This is an edited version of "BAD Broadside #5" by the Boston Anarchist Drinking Brigade (POB 1323, Cambridge, MA. 02238).

T1SORT19/5/4

STAR-LEDGER, 4/15/95

READERS' FORUM

Can prisoner rights and justice coexist?

DEAR EDITOR:

The implications of racism and white supremacy that permeated your March 19 article, "Prisons: A Growth Industry," is something which should shock the conscience of everyone reading that article. I felt as if I were reading an article on slavery and slaves instead of the prison "industry" and prisoners.

That article detailed in plain language the increased value of people as they become a "valuable commodity" (!) after they enter prison. It is bitterly interesting that we are talking about the very same people (mostly males of color) who are valueless to this society as children, and have even less value as adolescents. They quote one for-profit company who says "it's kind of like a factory" with the owners of that factory earning over $200,000 a year based on the number of people they can warehouse.

This society makes an economic necessity out of the incapacitating of males of color. It seems to me that the longer I work as a prisoner advocate, the more I see the kinshp between slavery as it was and the prison system as it is now. The article goes on to point out that in New York "convicts are shipped to upstate communities that make millions of dollars housing urban criminals." How can a society live with itself when you have teachers and police quitting their jobs to become prison guards?

The way a society treats people convicted of crime is an indicator of the human values of that society. From where I sit, I see racism and a blatant disregard for the intrinsic worth of each of us.

Bonnie Kerness, Associate Director,
New Jersey Community Relations Program,
American Friends Service Committee,
Newark

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The North Jersey Herald & News

METRO

B Section

Tuesday, September 5, 1995

T/SOR/4-9/5/4

JENNIFER BROWN/The Herald & News

Neil Batelli, left, and Mathias Bolton, members of the Paterson Anarchist Collective, display photos of people they support.

Anarchists seek to help prisoners, poor

By DAN KRAUT
The Herald & News

PATERSON — Their meeting room is in the back of a travel agency, but the dozen members of the Paterson Anarchist Collective don't meet there to plan luxury cruises or trips to foreign nations.

Instead, they sit in their office — decorated with orange carpet and countless books — and plan visits to prisons in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

The men and women they visit are convicted of violent crimes, including someone who was involved in a shootout that left a New Jersey state trooper dead. But to the anarchists, these people are political prisoners. Some of the prisoners — who have affiliations with radical groups and write political literature — are their mentors.

Neil Batelli, 23, and Mathias Bolton, 22, co-founders of the anarchist group, also sell T-shirts and audio tapes to raise money for the prisoners. "Any movement that fails to fight for its prisoners is a sham movement," said Batelli, repeating a favorite phrase.

Although anarchy implies the overthrow of authority, collective members have allied themselves with Muslims and communists, who do not necessarily advocate the same beliefs. They are not quite certain what the ideal political state is, but they feel present governments work only for the benefit of the wealthy.

They also seek to empower people they consider disenfranchised — from the poor to racial minorities.

Batelli and Bolton have been friends since they met in grammar school in Haledon. Bolton, who once lived in Paterson, found that kids in Haledon ridiculed him because he wore cheap sneakers and depended on free lunches. He soon found himself defending communism in classroom discussions.

And when the students were assigned to write a report on a famous person, and other kids chose subjects like Babe Ruth or George Washington, Bolton chose Karl Marx, partly at the urging of a teacher, he recalled.

A conflict with Wayne police officers breaking up a skirmish in a shopping mall also convinced Bolton to dedicate his life to bringing down authority, he said, noting he then began distributing literature criticizing police.

These days, Batelli and Bolton say they don't vote, don't eat meat, don't take illegal drugs and don't drink alcohol.

"Struggle is internal as well as external," Bolton explained. "You can't be out there drinking if you want to struggle. It's counterrevolutionary."

Between their demonstrations, their literature distribution and their full-time jobs — Batelli works in a restaurant and Bolton in a warehouse — the pair have little time for partying.

In February, after a white city police officer shot an unarmed black teenageer suspected of transporting drugs, the pair attended nearly every demonstration with handfuls of literature that protested police brutality. The anarchists do not consider the protests — which erupted into sporadic looting — a riot.

"A riot is what happens at soccer games," Batelli said. "What happened

■ See ANARCHISTS, B2

ANARCHISTS/ Continued from Page B1

in Paterson was people saw something and they wanted to do something about it."

"It was a rebellion against the government," Bolton added.

The pair said looting was counterproductive, but Batelli complained that homelessness and poverty are forms of violence and said, "We believe people have the right to struggle for self-determination by any means necessary."

They vote among themselves — but they believe that voting in municipal elections is also counterproductive. "No matter who you vote for, you vote for government," Bolton complained.

When asked what the ideal society would be, he answered "I'm not sure I understand what it is, but capitalism isn't the answer."

T/SOR/4-9/5/4

READERS' FORUM

Human rights abuses here

Otis Pike deserves accolades for his tell-it-like-it-is column "What if Wu took a look at our jails?" As a human rights advocate who monitors New Jersey prisons as well as other "correctional" institutions nationwide, I am on the receiving end of telephone calls from prisoners, members of their families, lawyers and other advocates.

We have chosen to treat lawbreakers with removal from society as a consequence. Somewhere along the line, the criminal justice system – without benefit of public sanction – has decided that separation is not enough punishment. The system, therefore, sees fit to impose cruelty in the form of torture, denial of medical care, verbal and physical abuse, sensory deprivation cages and mind-numbing inactivity.

Pike notes that the number of people of color in U.S. prisons is completely out of proportion to their number in the population. In looking at who this country imprisons, for what reasons and for how long, it is not hard to conclude that our prisons are being used for political purposes just as Mr. Wu has documented in China.

The United States now has over 5 million people under some form of social control. Most are people of color. It is always ironic to me when I read of some American or other protesting human rights abuses in other countries. It also baffles me. How can people in this country be so ready to criticize what is going on in other countries without even investigating one of the cruelest and most senseless institutions in the world – the U.S. prison system?

Bonnie Kerness,
American Friends Service Committee,
Newark

THE STAR-LEDGER, Thursday, September 14, 1995